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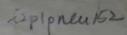
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Notes on Mrs. Franklin's Speech - "A P.N.R.U. Nursery".

Mrs. Franklin said that before Miss Mason had called her attention to it, she had not realised that this was the 21st Annual Conference of the Parents' National Educational Union. Miss Mason had said that she ought to be pleased to think it had reached its majority, because the Annual Conference was "her child". The Conference was, of course, the cutcome of the Union, which had long passed its majority. It was thirty years since "Home Education" had been written.

Before putting together the thoughts that she wanted to give that morning, she had given herself the unusual pleasure of looking through the early volumes of the "Parents' Review". Few magazines would stand re-reading, but these old volumes had made her late in going to hed, and would have made her late in getting up, if she had not had hebits of punctuality formed as a child! In some ways the reading made one feel depressed; all the newest ideas - the thoughts which had gone to make Baby Week - were there. Even the suggestion that we should not leave it too late to discuss the all important questions of sex and purity with our children; even the idea of introducing the Farents' Union School programme into

elementary schools, were there. This had now been realised and the hope that the principles of the Union might penetrate to all parts of the world; this, too, had been realised when a branch was formed in New Zealand and correspondence opened up with Japan, etc. At the Baby Week Exhibition one saw the latest thing in hygienic garments for children; they were just what the more advanced and more eccentric members of the Union had had for their children twenty-five years ago. Years ago, again, the Hyde Park Branch had had a lecture on "Open Windows in the Bedroom". In disussion if appeared that members thought there would be a great danger of burglars! We had progressed on the physical side at least.

But perhaps one was inclined to ask:- "Why did it not go more quickly?". No good thing grew rapidly and had it not taken 50 years and a war for medical women to come into their own for instance?

We need not be depressed by our slow progress; indeed we had every reason to thank God and rejoice, but it was well to realise, and to make children realise when learning history, that "the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding well".

The Union had always been equally for both parents, but until lately most of the up-bringing of children was left to the mother. Now, however, young fathers were coming into their own. Fathers and mothers were beginning to think more seriously

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about parentship and the education of their children. In Wells' "Marriage" we found the following quotation:-

These young parents were not going to lose their opportunity, but this did not mean that the work of the Union was ended; they would need help.

The dangers in their path - the difficulties of the modern nursery were not the same as those of 20 years ago, but they came probably from the same initial fault. Now, as then, people wanted a ready-made recepe for turning out a human being. Education was not a science, but a philosophy and at the moment there seemed a danger that parents might become a little too scientific: they were afraid to trust to their natural instincts at all. Wany babies were not allowed to be kissed now. Long ago, Miss Mason had fore shadowed this, but she had a principle behind it. It was not of physical welfare that she was thinking. She said:- "I think the old-fashioned method of little children curtesying and kissing the hand of the elder as they comeinto the room, prevents selfconsciousness." She also added, "It puts the lady visitor in her place; she cannot be admiring and talking about the child when that child is showing her deference". The underlying thought in her mind, however, was to save the child from self-consciousness. Children of the moment were very self-conscious, because they were much talked of and studied and they knew it.

At last habit formation had been recognised as a very important part of education. It has even become an obsession.

A modern mother would say:- "I would rather do anything than let

the child cry; I can't allow him to get the orying habit'".

This might mean putting the child in an environment where
there was no chance of being naughty, and it would prevent
him from becoming a strong and independent character. Parents
should remember that endurance and struggle encourage growth.

In 1887 Viss Mason said:-

Mothers did not as a rule have to urged to take and interest keep in their children now-a-days; rather, they ought to bear in mind that the burden of motherhood must be borne as a Spanish woman bears her pitcher - gracefully, easily and with head erect.

Mothers must not be over anxious or always tied to their children; there was such a thing as masterly inactivity.

Just now there was a cry for children's freedom, but this must not degenerate into the indulgence of whims. It was a mistake to be too individual in education. The motto of the Parents' Union was:- "I am, I can, I ought, I will," that is, "I am a human-being with some of the Divine in me; therefore, I can achieve; I ought because it is expected of me; I will because it is my duty". Ferhaps a modern child would be prone to read the motto thus:- "I am Anne Lushton (I should have said Dorothy twenty-five years ago); I can because I am Anne Lushton; I ought because I am Anne Lushton; I will because I am Anne Lushton."

There was a delightful description in "Home Education" of long hours spent by a child with nature, but one must not forget that it is enough for the child to take in these pictures, sensations and memories and that he should not be given the difficult task of describing what he felt. That would come with the school age.

To train the ear, it is really not necessary to use ugly

apparatus, when we have the notes of a bird, the song of the river, or even the sound of different foot-steps or the rolling of two-wheeled and four-wheeled vehicles along the road. We should not talk much to children, but" let nature be their nurse".

As a child's body grew with food, so his mind grew with ideas - thought kindled thought. We wanted a child to be heroic; then we must feed his mind with stories of heroes as embodied in literature and history.

We all longed for the friendship of our children. This did not depend on being constantly together, but there must be interests in common, and delightful memories to recall.

Modern parents wanted quick results, and were apt to tell their children what to think and feel, but this was dangerous. They did not enough respect the personality of their child. The war had shown us what men and women were capable of - both out at the front and here at home. We had been surprised - sometimes in our own children. We asked ourselves "have we ever really known our own children, do we ever know another human being?" Parents rarely succeeded in amking their children into their ideal; they were anxious and must be anxious to bring out the best that God intended them to be, but this could not be accomplished by moulding or pouring in, but by feeding the child's mind on a wise diet of good thoughts and of great love. We must remember

that "except the Lord build the house, we labour in vain who build it".

Many parents had the fear that Yeats expressed in his "Cradle Song":-

A PAGE BURNERO

Something more than this first love is needed to keep our children's friendship than this first-love - there must also be, knowledge, interest and prayer.

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